

Events planned for Fire Prevention Week

By Robert Hoffman
Base fire inspector

Fire Prevention Week at Charleston AFB begins Monday and will kick off with fire drills at the Child Development Center and Youth Center. The schedule of events is:

Monday: 10 a.m. -- Sparkey will visit the Child Development Center; 3:30 p.m. -- Sparkey will visit the Youth Center

Tuesday: Fire drills throughout the base; Sparkey will be visiting throughout base housing

Wednesday: Fire drills throughout the base; 7 p.m. -- live Crash Fire Rescue at Bldg. 239 on Bates St.

Thursday: Familiarization rides for squadron commanders on a Crash Fire Rescue vehicle; 6:30 p.m. -- EDITH drills at 1515 James Ave. (bring your own flashlights)

Oct. 8: A fire prevention display at the Base Exchange. It will include fire extinguisher training, a stove fire demonstration and handouts; 3:30 p.m. -- parade through base housing, Fire Dept. vehicle and equipment display.

Oct. 9: 9 a.m. -- City of Charleston Parade ending at Charlestown Landing with a fire department muster.

Oct. 10: Tri-county Fire Chiefs muster at Charlestown Landing.

National Fire Prevention Week originated after the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred on Oct. 9, 1871. This fire killed 300 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. The origin of the fire has become blurred over the years. The most popular legend has it that Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking her cow when the animal kicked over a lamp, setting the O'Leary's barn on fire.

However, once the fire started it swiftly burned out of control and spread over 2,000 acres in 27 hours. The city of Chicago was quickly rebuilt, and within a few years, residents began to celebrate their successful restoration by observing the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire.

The Fire Marshals Association of North America, the oldest membership section of the National Fire Protection Association, decided the 40th anniversary of the fire should be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. So, on

Oct. 9, 1911, the first National Fire Prevention Day was sponsored by FMANA. Realizing its significance, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first nation-wide Fire Prevention Day.

A few years later, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the first National Fire Prevention Week Oct. 4-10, 1925. Noting in 1924 that some 15,000 lives were lost to fire in the United States, President Coolidge proclaimed, "This waste results from conditions which justify a sense of shame and horror; for the greater part of it could and ought to be prevented....It is highly desirable that every effort be made to reform the conditions which have made possible so vast a destruction of national wealth."

Did you know that fires kill more Americans than all natural disasters combined? Most fire losses can be prevented through effective public education and awareness.

Many Americans believe fires only happen to other people. They think, "Not me, not my home." Yet more than 70 percent of fire deaths occur in residences, most often claiming the lives of the young, the elderly and the disadvantaged.

Fire departments all over the country are working to reduce the number of fire deaths and injuries to those high-risk groups and the general public by:

- Increasing public awareness about the dangers of fire
- Promoting the use of smoke detectors in the home
- Performing facility inspections

For more information, call the fire department at 963-3121.

Fire prevention tips

- Don't overload extension cords or run them under rugs.
- Replace any cord that is cracked or frayed. If an appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it and have it repaired by a professional.
- Use the proper size fuses in your fuse box.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area.
- Test them monthly and install new batteries.

Singing Sergeants perform at CSU Oct. 9

The USAF Singing Sergeants will perform at Charleston Southern University's Lightsey Chapel Auditorium Oct. 9 at 7 p.m.

Admission is free. Obtain tickets by visiting the Horton School of Music at CSU or by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope and ticket request to:

Horton School of Music
University Bands
P.O. Box 118087
Charleston, SC 29423

The Singing Sergeants, the 24-voice official chorus of the Air Force, is one of the world's most versatile and traveled choral organizations. It is also one of a select few singing groups internationally recognized for its continuing commitment to excellence in vocal performance.

Originally formed in 1945 from within the ranks of The United States Air Force Band, the chorus is now composed entirely of professional vocalists who have come from leading colleges, universities and music conservatories throughout the world, and who are, yes, all sergeants in the United States Air Force. Available positions are filled by audition only and are reserved for those singers who demonstrate the finest qualities of musicianship and vocal production.

In addition to choral concert appearances, the Singing Sergeants are featured on performances presented by The United States Air Force Concert Band. It is through these performances that the chorus maintains its unique heritage. Included in The Singing Sergeants' repertoire is vocal music from opera, traditional and contemporary choral literature, oratorio, folk songs, pop standards, musical theater and jazz, with an emphasis on the choral music of America.

The group has appeared before every chief executive of the United States since President Truman, as well as with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia, Cleveland, Houston and National Symphony Orchestras, and both the Boston and Cincinnati Pops. The group has performed at White House, State Department, Supreme Court, Congressional, Department of Defense and high-level civilian functions.